Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4204th meeting

Wednesday, 4 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Andjaba	(Namibia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Heinbecker
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Netherlands	Mr. vanWalsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/928)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/929)

Identical letters dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/930)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/934)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/935)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

00-67366 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.20 p.m., 4 October 2000.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, the Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Thayeb (Indonesia), Mr. Akasaka (Japan), Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon), Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam), took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 3 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Hussein Hassouna, Ambassador, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to participate in the Council's forthcoming discussions on the situation in the Palestinian occupied territories."

That letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2000/939.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Hussein Hassouna.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 3 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour in my capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group of the United Nations to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to participate in the discussion under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion on the item entitled 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question', scheduled for Wednesday, 4 October 2000."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2000/951.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Lamani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Despite the tragic circumstances in which this first meeting of the Security Council under your presidency, Sir, is being held, I should like to express my joy and pride at seeing you, a worthy son of Africa, following another worthy son of Africa at the helm of the Council.

I am convinced that the great professional and human qualities that all of your colleagues recognize in you will enable you to conduct the work of the Council as brilliantly as did your predecessor, my brother Ambassador Moctar Ouane of Mali — who has earned our gratitude and admiration — during a particularly busy month, when heads of State and Government honoured us with their presence, including in this very Chamber.

I thank you for the opportunity to participate in these deliberations. I should like to make a few comments concerning the way the Security Council functions and its attitude towards deciding the timeliness of convening or not convening a formal meeting.

Increasingly, the consultations of the Council have indeed been delayed and dragged out beyond measure over the question of whether or not to meet in public, even when a request for such a meeting has been submitted by one or several regional groups; over the principle of whether or not to involve non-members of the Council; over the issue of whether or not to limit, out of considerations that are not always well founded, the right of certain countries to speak; and even over the merit of calling on speakers to adopt a particular tone in debates.

As if it were not enough that the Council's way of doing business already causes sufficient problems and that its methods already need revision and improvement, attempts are now being made to restrict access to it.

I wish to remind the Council that it is my understanding and that of the States Members of this Organization that it is the absolute right of any Member State to call for a public meeting and that it is also the absolute right of any State to speak in a debate and to adopt the tone it deems appropriate.

For a number of States Members of this Organization, and certainly for its weakest and smallest, the United Nations remains the ultimate forum in which they can, in all freedom and without fear, express their opinions, their expectations and even their frustrations and anger when the international community is incapable of protecting women and children from the deadly madness of men in the Middle East, in Africa, Europe or elsewhere.

To restrict the right to speak and to prefer the secrecy of consultations — which may occasionally prove to be useful and necessary — to frank, transparent and open debate is undemocratic and contrary to the very principles of our Organization. If this regrettable trend continues, we may one day find ourselves reduced to contemplating the famous statement of a French revolutionary: "All we have left is the right to keep quiet and there has been talk of stripping us of that". This situation only makes the reform of the Security Council even more urgent. Perhaps it is time for us seriously to tackle this question.

For several days now the populations of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied Palestinian territories have been the objects of a repression the likes of which has rarely been seen since the intifada. Children and adolescents, armed only with their faith in the justice of their cause, and having nothing to protect themselves besides the pathetic means of defence that nature offers them, are, in effect, facing an incredible deployment of force involving tanks, missiles and helicopter gunships.

The result of this obviously unfair confrontation — can we really talk about a confrontation? — is that scores of innocent people, including very young children, including even today a 10-year-old child in the Gaza Strip — have been killed in cold blood by bullets. Meanwhile, to fight their murderers these young people have had only their fists and their stones, and even the ambulances bearing the flag of the Red Cross have been fired at.

Over these past days we have all witnessed this barbaric behaviour of another age. We all saw live on our television screens the unbearable sight of that 12-year-old child who was cruelly killed despite the supplications of his father and his father's vain attempts to protect his son from the bullets of the Israeli soldiers. What is still worse is that even the ambulance worker who tried to help found himself caught in the crossfire of the Israeli army and was killed.

If these painful images that the cameras have brought into each of our living rooms and that still haunt us and will haunt us for ever, even in this Chamber of the Security Council — if these images can serve some purpose, it is to convince us that, on the one hand, it is not acceptable that children are targeted, and, on the other hand, that as a matter of urgency we must do all we can to see to it that this shameful butchery stops as soon as possible and that the civilian population that has been the victim of the brutality of the Israeli occupying forces is protected.

The acts that triggered the tragic developments that have been occurring in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied territories since last Friday are well known, as are those who are responsible for it. We all know that the originator of this terrible tragedy was the commander who ordered the massacre of Sabra and Shatila and the invasion and occupation of Lebanon. We all also know that what he wished to achieve from these acts of provocation — which led to the tragedy that the people in the occupied Palestinian territories are now undergoing — was to scuttle the peace process and wreck for ever the chance of achieving a just and final settlement of the Palestinian question. And we all know that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace cannot be achieved without the total, definitive withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the territories that have been occupied since 1967 and without the restoration of the Palestinian people's national, legitimate rights, including its right to create its own independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

In this difficult time when Palestinian civilians are victims of the brutality of the occupying forces, it is important that the Security Council rise to its responsibilities and fulfil its role and its mandate with regard to the Palestinian people and international law. In this connection, the Council must see to it that, as soon as possible, a stop is put to the illegal actions that the Israeli occupying Power is engaging in. In particular, an end must be put to the use of real bullets against a defenceless civilian population.

The Israeli security forces must also immediately withdraw from the plaza of Al-Haram Al-Sharif and allow the third holy place of Islam to regain its serenity and tranquillity, and they must also must withdraw from the Palestinian towns where they are deployed. Finally, Israel, as the administering Power, must be put on notice to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention and to guarantee the security and protection of Palestinian civilians.

These are our expectations — the expectations of my country, Algeria, which has stood, continues to stand and in the future will stand united with the fraternal Palestinian people, and which believes firmly that peace is the right strategy for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These are also, I am sure, the expectations of the international community as a whole, and the Security Council has no right to disappoint it.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Let me also begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting to consider a serious development that comes to all of us as a shock.

We all saw the pain-ridden face of that small child lying at his father's side as the last breath of life slipped out of him. This was only one glimpse of the fate that is suffered by thousands of children in different parts of the world that are under foreign occupation or in conflict situations. This tragedy is a grim reminder that a part of humanity dies each time an innocent life is snuffed out by violence.

The Security Council meets today in the wake of the tragic events in Palestine, resulting in the deaths of scores of innocent civilians, including children, and injuries to many others. With these events, the hope that peace was finally taking root in the Middle East has fast evaporated.

We share the international outrage and concern at the high-handedness of the Israeli forces' actions against defenceless Palestinian civilians in the very vicinity of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the third most holy place of Islam. The immediate reason is the misplaced determination of certain elements in Israel to undermine the Middle East peace process. The Security Council must send an unequivocal message that such provocative actions and the bloodshed of innocent Palestinians are unacceptable to the international community.

The excessive force used by the Israeli security forces is simply unjustifiable. Grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 have been committed. The first article of that Convention emphasizes that

> "The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances."

Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) continue to provide a viable and just framework for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, Holy Jerusalem, remains central to any comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. No lasting peace in the region will be possible without the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. These include their right to establish their independent State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital and the exercise of their full sovereignty over Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Pakistan extends its unequivocal support to the just struggle of the people of Palestine for their inalienable rights. This has been our policy in respect of all peoples struggling against foreign occupation and repression.

The peace process had recently been making steady, if agonizingly slow, progress due to realistic approaches of the leaders of the two sides. It has now been dealt a severe blow and has been pushed to the verge of collapse. Continuation of the violence threatens to wreck the peace process. Immediate steps are therefore needed to prevent any further deterioration of the situation. The peace process must be urgently put back on track on the basis of agreements reached and full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. At stake are the authority and credibility of the United Nations.

Prompt action is therefore required by the international community, in particular the Security Council, to put an end to the present round of violence against the Palestinians, secure Israel's compliance with United Nations resolutions, ensure the safety and sanctity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and facilitate the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people. The prospects for peace in that region, and indeed the future prosperity of the Middle East, now rest with this body.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month. I am confident that your wisdom, experience and wide-ranging knowledge will lead us to the desired success. May I also express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, the representative of Mali, for the skill with which he presided over the deliberations of the Council last month. May I furthermore express my thanks to you for convening this emergency meeting of the Security Council following a request by the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned States.

The convening of this emergency meeting at this time to take up the situation in the Palestinian occupied territories is a clear expression of how aware and concerned the Security Council is about the latest grave events that threaten our region with a new wave of violence and bloodshed. His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein has warned of the threat of such acts to the peace process. These events once again reaffirm the urgent need for peace in the Middle East as well as the right of the Palestinian people to be rid of the injustice and occupation under which they have languished for a very long time.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan condemns the attacks and the heinous crimes committed against Palestinians in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied territories by the Israeli occupation forces. We call on the Israeli Government to withdraw its forces from the territories and towns under Palestinian authority without delay.

The events in Al-Quds Al-Sharif are a direct consequence of extremism and provocative practices perpetrated by those who reject peace inside Israel against Palestinians and against the feelings of Arabs and Muslims. The Prime Minister of Jordan, Mr. Ali Abul Ragheb, has stated that condoning extremism will only lead to further extremism and strife and will overcome the voice of dialogue, which we have all accepted in the region as the only effective means to reach just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan calls on the Israeli Government to shoulder its responsibilities vis-à-vis this critical situation at this delicate stage of the peace process in the region. We call upon it to cease harming the Palestinian people. In

particular, it must stop the harm being meted out by short-sighted extremists who, by their acts, are undermining the peace process and working to renew strife, violence, hatred and enmity in the region.

Jordan, its King, its Government and its people reaffirm their solidarity with our brothers, the Palestinian people, as they seek to achieve their legitimate rights and establish their independent State on their national soil with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

May I, on behalf of my Government, express our condolences and sympathy to the Palestinian leadership and to our brothers, the Palestinian people, and with their innocent martyrs.

The President: I thank the representative of Jordan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I am certain that under your wise guidance the work of the Council will proceed in a constructive, effective and successful fashion.

I wish also to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Moctar Ouane, Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations, on the exemplary way in which he guided the work of the Council in September — which is to say during the historic millennium Summit.

I am grateful to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Security Council for having given me the opportunity to participate, in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in this important debate on the very recent events in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

For several months we have been following very closely the endeavours to bring about a final peace settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and we had been increasingly hopeful about the outcome of the peace process. Although the Camp David peace summit sponsored by the United States in July did not yield all the hoped-for results, the parties nevertheless remained together and frankly addressed all the issues. This gave us reason to hope that agreement might be reached. Indeed, the Palestinian side decided last month to postpone a declaration of statehood, even though it was entirely entitled to make such a declaration. With that courageous and responsible act, Palestine gave peace another chance.

Unfortunately, the Israeli side failed to reciprocate. Throughout the time when Israeli-Palestinian final status negotiations were under way, Israeli settlement continued without interruption, both in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip. Those unlawful measures, which seriously undermined the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in occupied East Jerusalem, are a blatant violation of international law, of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and of the great number of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly since 1947.

As members know, the latest outbreak of violence followed in the wake of the provocative visit to the forecourt of the holy site of Al-Haram Al-Sharif by the Israeli opposition leader Mr. Ariel Sharon, and of the brutal, disproportionate and indiscriminate way in which the Israeli defence forces and police responded to the protests the visit triggered among Palestinians. As we all know, the results have been tragic: 63 Palestinian appear to have been killed, and more than 1,500 injured. The victims include civilians and even innocent children, some as young as 12 years of age. These inhuman acts run counter to humanitarian law and to the letter and the spirit of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and of subsequent implementation agreements. These actions could threaten the integrity of the peace negotiations at a time when these should be entering their most critical phase. They have struck a harsh blow to the credibility of the entire peace process, and thus threaten the peace and stability of the region.

These deplorable events have caused concern throughout the international community, beginning with the co-sponsors of the peace process, as well as the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Committee on the

Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People wishes to join them in calling upon the two parties to refrain from any further escalation of violence, and to spare no effort to defuse the tension once and for all. Moreover, the Committee joins with all in the international community who have called upon the Israeli Government and upon the Israeli political parties and security forces to take no further measures that could jeopardize the peace process. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People calls for respect for the holy places. The Committee calls for ensuring that the Palestinian population will be protected. The Committee calls for protection of the property of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and for a halt to all activities that could cause the peace efforts to miscarry. The Committee appeals to the parties to proceed swiftly to full, good-faith implementation of the agreements that have already been concluded, with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The Committee remains convinced that only by speedy, joint progress along the path of the peace process, towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, will it be possible to stop the situation in the Middle East from deteriorating. Any exacerbation of the present tension could have unforeseeable consequences for peace and stability in the region — something no one could wish to see.

As we are all aware, there is no possible alternative to peace negotiations — the negotiations upon which the two parties embarked so courageously. Israeli leaders should recognize that peace and stability cannot be imposed unilaterally and by military means, but that peace and security must rest first and foremost on mutual respect and on the development of a partnership based on equity and mutual trust. There is no need to recall that Israeli policies and practices that deny the legitimate needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people can never be compatible with the peace process.

By convening this meeting, members of the Security Council have clearly shown that they have been deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and at the problems that threaten to derail the peace process. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People fervently hopes that this discussion will provide an opportunity for the Council to show its determination to find ways to prevent an escalation of the violence we have all been witnessing, and also to get the peace process back on track so that it can soon reach a successful conclusion.

The international community, and in particular the sponsors of the peace process, must assist the parties to make rapid progress along the path of negotiated peace, a path to which they committed themselves together to guarantee lasting peace in the region.

In conclusion, let me state once again that the Committee I represent believes that the United Nations should continue to exercise the primary, ongoing responsibility incumbent on it with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine, including the problem of Jerusalem, until the question is settled in a satisfactory manner, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and international law, until finally all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized. The events that have brought us together today once again prove that the United Nations must continue to involve itself in the question of Palestine and in all the questions relating to peace and security in the Middle East.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Our delegation wishes at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your accession to the presidency of the Council for this month, for we are well aware of your experience and capabilities. We also wish to express our thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Moctar Ouane of the Republic of Mali, for his excellent efforts in steering the Council last month. My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to you and to all the members of the Council for convening this meeting, which affirms the Council's credibility in undertaking one of the most important tasks it has been entrusted with under the United Nations Charter: maintaining international peace and security.

Kuwait wishes to affirm that the massacres perpetrated by Ariel Sharon, with the blessings and support of the Israeli Government, against the Palestinian people and the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, are indeed blatant threats to international security, not to mention the fact that they are also blatant provocations of the feelings of the Arab nation and the Islamic world alike.

Our delegation finds it very difficult to describe our emotions when faced with the massacres and the tragedy to which children, youth and the elderly are being subjected in Palestine; massacres that continue through today, and in which more than one person has been killed and hundreds have been wounded, according to the media. We can never forget the images seen by the entire world of the martyrdom of the Palestinian child, Mohammed Al-Durra, and other Palestinian children who have fallen victim to the savage and barbaric acts of the Israeli occupying forces.

What makes it more painful to us, as human beings first of all, before being Muslims and Arabs, is the reaction of the United Nations, which recently declared at the Millennium Summit its commitment to spare no effort to protect the vulnerable, particularly the children — the generations of the future. Unfortunately, this leads us to pose many questions concerning the credibility of what has often been declared in this Organization and what has been implemented over a long period of time. I refer in particular, first, to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949; secondly, to the Security Council meetings on the protection of civilians during armed conflict, and particularly resolution 1261 (1999), adopted by the Security Council in this connection; thirdly, to the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict and his appointment of an international representative for this purpose; fourthly, to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989; fifthly, to the results of the Millennium Summit — the ink of the Declaration is not yet dry; and, sixthly, to the special session of the General Assembly for follow-up to the World Summit for Children, to be held next year.

Bearing in mind all the above within the context of what we have been witnessing over the past few days — the tragedies and the deliberate murder of unarmed children — can we really convince our peoples today that the United Nations has the capacity to prevent the likes of Ariel Sharon if they decide to put an end to the innocence of childhood? Can the United Nations alleviate the suffering of every Palestinian child who has fallen victim to recent repressive Israeli practices? Our delegation will leave it up to the members of the Security Council to answer those questions.

The Government of the State of Kuwait, as represented by the Council of Ministers, has denounced those savage Israeli practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and Al-Quds Al-Sharif resulting from the Israeli forces' resorting to extreme measures against civilians there. Kuwait has expressed its rejection and condemnation at all levels of Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the holy city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the desecration of holy Islamic shrines. Moreover, Kuwait considers these Israeli practices blatant violations of Security Council resolution 1261 (1999), which firmly condemned any operations directed against children in armed conflicts. They are also violations of the principles of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention.

It has become very clear to world public opinion how sensitive the issue of Al-Quds Al-Sharif is for us all. It has become clear that the Arab and Islamic peoples will never give up their rights to those holy shrines, particularly Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the third holiest Islamic site. In this respect, Kuwait reaffirms its position on the need to support the demands of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and the right to establish their independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region must be based on the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and on the principle of land-for-peace and Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Arab Syrian Golan.

In conclusion, we call upon the Security Council to assume its responsibilities, end Israel's repressive practices against the innocent unarmed civilians of Palestine, condemn Israel's practices, ask it to withdraw its forces from Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and all Palestinian territories, and call for an international investigation of the crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people, in particular the crimes committed against children. Moreover, the Council should hold

the Israeli Government fully responsible for all its actions.

Kuwait would like to express its appreciation for the efforts to establish peace and normalcy in the region made by the Governments of the United States of America and France, as well as those made by Egypt under the leadership of President Hosni Mubarak and his Government.

The President: I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I am certain that your experience and diplomatic skills will help us to deal with the sensitive, important and serious subject before us. Undoubtedly, your decision to convene this meeting stemmed from your deep understanding of the problem we currently face on the Palestinian front and its potential effects on the Middle East as a whole. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mali, Ambassador Ouane, for his wisdom and excellent conduct of the work of the Council during his presidency in September.

The popular uprising currently raging in the occupied Palestinian territories is but an expression of the frustration and oppression suffered by the Palestinian people at the hands of Israel's tyranny, which has surpassed all limits. The most recent example of that tyranny was the provocative visit by Ariel Sharon, the leader of the Israeli opposition, to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. That visit was another attempt by Israel to assert its baseless claims over Al-Quds Al-Sharif, in complete disregard of all international resolutions and covenants, and in particular of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). It was not only a provocation to the sentiments of the Palestinian people, but also a provocation to the feelings of millions of Muslims around the world, and has aroused unprecedented risks. As we know, there are limits to people's patience. We believe that for the Palestinian people the situation has now surpassed the limits of patience.

We, together with the entire world, have followed the horrible images in the world press and television networks of the actions against unarmed civilians perpetrated by Israel's occupation forces, who are armed with all sorts of light and heavy weapons, including tanks and helicopters. One of the most atrocious crimes committed by those forces was the heart-wrenching and painful scene of 12-year-old Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra being killed in the arms of his father. In addition to being one of the most outrageous scenes we have seen, it was also a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

I would like, on behalf of the Government, the people and the Permanent Mission of Qatar, to extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of all the victims. We pray to Almighty God to grant the victims a place among the martyrs at his side.

The aggressive actions against an unarmed people by the Israeli army, which was backed by groups of Jewish settlers and has violated all international customs and norms, represents a shameful stigma upon anyone who defends the Israeli position today. Those actions are further proof that Israel's Government continues to be held hostage to extremist factions within the Israeli population that completely disregard internationally binding resolutions. The international community is urged to act and to assume its responsibility towards the Palestinian people, whose land has been occupied and whose members have been expelled to every part of the world to suffer the fate of a permanent Diaspora as a direct result of Israel's ongoing rejection of their right to return to their homeland.

Together with the entire world, we await the outcome of the Paris talks that have brought together Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. However, Qatar's view of the peace process in the Middle East is founded on realistic foundations and principles, regardless of the differing views about that situation. Achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace requires putting an end to Israel's occupation of all occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and enabling the Palestinian people to secure their legitimate national and political rights. Those rights include their right to return to their land, to enjoy self-determination

and to have an independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The tragic events that are taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories should not be condoned or forgotten. People never forgive or forget. In this regard, we call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter and take the following actions.

First, it should intervene rapidly and call upon Israel to halt its excessive and aggressive hostilities and to withdraw its forces, which continue to kill innocent, unarmed Palestinian civilians, including children. Secondly, it should guarantee Palestinians total freedom to carry out their religious practices in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, free from harassment by Israeli forces. Thirdly, it should launch an international investigation of these tragic and outrageous events and call for the prosecution of those Israelis responsible for firing on Palestinian citizens, killing scores and wounding hundreds more. Fourthly, it should condemn the provocation caused by Ariel Sharon's visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Fifthly, it should condemn the actions of the occupying Israeli forces and call on them to comply with the norms and instruments of international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. And sixthly, it should call for compensation to Palestinian civilians for the loss of life and material damage that they incurred as a result of those events. This is the least it can do to appease the outrage of the Arab peoples and to maintain the credibility of the Security Council in the eyes of the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of Qatar for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I have placed my statement in a black file as an expression of condolence and mourning for the Palestinian children who were martyred by the bullets of Israeli soldiers in the West Bank, in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and in the Gaza Strip. This is the least that I, as an Arab citizen, could do.

First of all, I should like, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to you my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish you every success. I should like also to express my appreciation to you for your speedy response to the request made by the United Nations Arab Group, the Islamic Group and the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement to convene this urgent and important meeting, in order to allow the Council to assume its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

The leader of the extremist Likud party, Ariel Sharon, whose hands are still stained with the blood of the martyrs of the Sabra and Shatila massacre, has desecrated the courtyard of Al-Haram Al-Sharif. That desecration was a blatant provocation and an attack on the feelings and emotions of Muslims, and it had the predictable results of triggering an uprising by the Palestinian people against this deliberate act of aggression.

The day before yesterday, an Israeli Government official declared that the Government did not approve of Sharon's conduct and believed that the visit had been a mistake. That official also said that the Palestinian reaction was an orchestrated scenario. We would like at this juncture to ask if it is reasonable to allege that the Palestinians wanted and planned a situation in which not dozens but hundreds of Palestinian children would die at the hands of the Israeli army — not the Israeli police — as a reprisal for throwing stones — stones thrown yesterday by children who have become men today.

Israeli bullets pierced the bodies of Palestinians, blowing them to bits. One can only imagine the physical suffering endured by those people, who were also attacked by tanks, armoured vehicles and snipers. Victims — men, women and children — fell before the Israeli army, which was armed to the teeth. Most of those present have seen the picture published on Sunday by *The New York Times*, a picture of a father and son, terror apparent on their faces. Seconds after the picture was taken, the son was killed and the father wounded trying to protect him.

The latest episode in this bloody chain of events, as reported in Arab newspapers, concerns a father who was helping to identify the bodies of murdered Palestinians. He was shocked to discover that one of the bodies was that of his son. He had been killed in an extremely savage manner. The newspaper reported that

"A rocket pierced Sami's thin, dark body and destroyed his chest and abdomen. He also had seven bullets in his torso. Sami was transferred to the hospital without an identity card. The news spread that an unidentified martyr was in the hospital, and the official Palestinian television station broadcast Sami's picture. However, his father and his sick mother, who was in the same hospital, did not know that their son had died in another part of that hospital."

In the face of these tragic events, we cannot but ask the survivors of the Holocaust if, following the ordeal they suffered, an Israeli generation exists that wants to retaliate — in a merciless, savage and barbaric manner — against people who were not responsible for their ordeal. What crime have the Palestinians committed that they should pay the price of mistakes made by others? Their nation was occupied, their lands confiscated, their citizens slaughtered in retaliation for a crime perpetrated by others. Where is the 1949 Geneva Convention? Where are Security Council resolutions 242 (1968) and 338 (1973), among the other resolutions adopted in accordance with international law concerning the rights of the Palestinian people? Israel rode roughshod over them, just as it disregarded the agreements concluded following the Oslo talks and the Madrid Conference. Israel wants only one peace: that which fulfils its desire — the desire not to withdraw from the occupied territories, let alone to give up the confiscated land on which it has built its settlements.

Is it possible on that basis for just peace talks — I stress the qualification, "just" — to have any chance of success? The Palestinians, supported by the Arabs, are advocates of peace. Provocation always comes from the Israeli side. The Israeli side must be fully convinced, on the basis of its experience, that surrendering is not in the vocabulary of the Palestinians or the Arabs. It has eloquent testimony of this fact in the stone-throwing children of the past who are the stone-throwing men of today. If Israel leans towards a comprehensive peace based on justice, with a provocation-free credibility, the Palestinians, supported by the Arabs, will be the first to go along with it.

The President: I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: It is my pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Council for this month. We are confident that your efforts will be crowned with success. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to you for your swift response in convening this emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the crisis situation that resulted from the savage Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in Al-Quds and the occupied Palestinian Arab territories.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Mr. Moctar Ouane for his efforts last month. I also extend my gratitude to all the representatives of Member States who supported the convening of this meeting, in particular, to my brother the Ambassador of Tunisia, who sent a message on behalf of the Arab Group, and my brother Ambassador Hasmy Agam of Malaysia, the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Security Council and of the Islamic Group.

There were six days of bloodshed before this meeting was convened — days that witnessed the martyrdom and wounding of many of our Palestinian brothers in Al-Quds and the occupied Palestinian territories, including the Palestinians who were within Israel in 1948. The number of those killed can now be counted in scores, and more than 2,000 have been wounded, according to today's information, many of whom will join the list of martyrs as a result of their serious wounds and because the hospitals can no longer absorb the victims of this Israeli massacre.

I listened with great attention to the statements of those who spoke yesterday afternoon and this afternoon. It is very clear that they all consider the provocative visit by the leader of the Likud Party to Al-Quds Al-Sharif to be directly responsible for triggering the bloodshed and the tragic events in Al-Quds and the Palestinian territories.

The visit by Mr. Sharon, leader of the extremist Likud Party, and the support of the Israeli Labour Government for his visit — he was accompanied by military forces that receive their instructions not from Mr. Sharon, but from the Israeli Government itself — reflect the clear and unequivocal responsibility of the

Israeli Government for the visit and the bloodshed, and confirm that there is coordination between Barak's Labour Government and his former rival in Likud, Mr. Sharon, in planning the events for internal Israeli reasons. The lives of innocent Palestinian citizens have been the fuel for this Israeli war, waged against the Palestinian people.

Sharon's past is well known to everyone. This was not the first time that he had committed such a barbarous act leading to massacres. Nor was it the first time that Israel perpetrated an act of aggression against the holy Arab and Islamic sites in Al-Quds. We all remember the attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque and the person who perpetrated it, to whose memory a statue was erected. We all know about the tunnel that was dug under the Al-Aqsa Mosque at that time. Now, Israel has added yet another massacre to the long list of massacres perpetrated against the Arabs in the occupied territories.

The visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Sharon, who was surrounded by military and police forces, was a blatant provocation and an affront to the human dignity of our people, and could not but inflame their religious emotions. No sooner had the innocent worshippers denounced such racist behaviour than they were ruthlessly shot by the Israelis on the basis of prior orders that they had received in an attempt to bring the Palestinian people to their knees — a people who have refused to kneel and to give up.

We have all seen on television the use of aeroplanes, tanks, armour-piercing shells and anti-tank missiles directed at the heads and bodies of children who were killed in cold blood, not to mention the unjustified destruction of their homes and property. We have all seen and wept at the tragic events and the deliberate killing of children, the killing of the child mentioned by the Ambassador of Bahrain, the child who was in his father's arms, who was pleading for the Israeli snipers not to kill him. His father is being treated at the moment for the wounds that he received and is calling upon the world to avenge the killing of his child. And yet another child was killed by Israeli snipers as he was climbing on one of the buildings, as was another child, a girl aged two. The Israeli forces also killed the driver of the ambulance carrying the child, Mohammed Al-Durra. They are attacking the ambulances constantly not to mention the continuous killing.

The visit of Sharon and its very serious consequences raise a question. Why are the Israelis challenging the religious and national feelings of the Palestinians with the support of the Israeli Government? What can we conclude from this openly waged war — a war that is still claiming until this very moment more martyrs from amongst the Palestinians who are defending themselves with stones when faced with live ammunition and missiles? Everything seems to indicate that the Israeli Government most probably planned this massacre, particularly if we bear in mind the following facts.

First, in the course of the last two months the Israeli Government has provided the settlers with state-of-the-art lethal weapons so that they might contribute to the current massacre. That is what we see on television screens.

Secondly, the Israeli Government told its forces that were deployed all over Al-Quds and all over the West Bank to use live ammunition in addition to all kinds of other weapons to face children, the children we have been talking about, to face Palestinian youths defending themselves with blood and stones. Is a stone equal to a missile to live lethal ammunition?

Thirdly, the Israeli forces are committing collective, deliberate murder in operations that are no less horrible than "ethnic cleansing". They do so against all Palestinians, including the Palestinians of the interior who have been in Israel since 1948. All those acts are aimed at terrorizing and humiliating the Palestinians, at putting an end to Palestinian rights and at facilitating Israel's takeover of Al-Quds.

Fourthly, this massacre all over the Arab territories confirms once more that Israel is not interested in peace even though the Arabs have accepted peace. It shows once again that the peace process is going through one of its most difficult and complicated crises.

This raises another important question. Is Israel really willing to achieve a comprehensive and just peace? And where does the Security Council stand in the face of Israel's refusal to implement its resolutions, most important of which are resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), apart from other resolutions which by now form quite a volume.

Fifthly, the blood of the martyrs of Palestinian children, youths, women and old people, and the anger

of the Palestinian streets, the anger in Damascus and Baghdad, in Oman, in Cairo, in Lebanon — everywhere — are all irrefutable proof that the Arab Palestinian people will never give up their legitimate national rights, nor their sacred and holy shrines. The Palestinian people will safeguard their identity and their nation. Israel's attempts to take over Al-Quds in its entirety and to invent a new Al-Quds outside the city will face Palestinian resistance defending its legitimate rights and their holy sites with blood and stones.

Sixthly, Israeli aggression and crimes, particularly the visit of Sharon to Al-Haram Al-Sharif, triggered religious feelings and anger all over the world. It has been denounced and condemned by the Arab States, the Islamic States and many other countries, including States friendly to Israel.

The events seem to confirm the fact that Al-Quds is indeed the basic issue, the symbol for all Arabs and Muslims and Christians, and it would seem that the destiny of the people of Al-Quds is to stand up to Israeli plots that aim at Judaizing Jerusalem and usurping its Arab identity.

The Syrian Arab Republic, which has always supported the Palestinian struggle, denounces and firmly condemns the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and the horrible massacres perpetrated by Israel against our Palestinian brothers in Al-Quds and in the occupied territories, and against the Arabs of 1948 who hastened to support their brothers and to defend Al-Quds and the holy shrines and their Arab identity and dignity.

Syria expresses its heartfelt condolences to the brotherly Palestinian people as a whole and to the families of the martyrs who have died in defence of their legitimate rights.

The aggression of the occupying Israeli forces — aggression that continues even now — killing unarmed Palestinians, using live ammunition aimed at their heads and at their hearts, killing them in cold blood, destroying their properties — demonstrates that Israel is committing a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is applicable to all the Arab Palestinian occupied territories, including Al-Quds. Moreover, such acts are a blatant violation of the Charter, the principles of international law and international humanitarian law.

I reaffirm that Israel is proving day after day that it is not interested in peace, contrary to what its leaders say.

If Israel wants real peace, why is it prevaricating in the peace negotiations? Why is it not implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)? Why is it continuing to occupy Arab territories? Why does it not accept the return of Al-Quds to the Palestinian people? Why is it continuing its expansionist policies and settlements at the expense of the occupied Arab territories? And why is it attempting to impose conditions on some Arab parties?

Peace is still absent. The peace process is going through a very difficult phase because of the Israeli Government's obdurate and intransigent attitude and its non-recognition of the need to withdraw to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We should all be aware that peace has to be just and comprehensive or else there is no need for it. Peace will not become a reality unless Israel implements the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Madrid principles and references and resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the principle of land for peace. This will not happen until Israel withdraws from the occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

Syria has shown its sincerity and credibility in calling for a comprehensive and just peace. Our position has always been clear concerning our rights and has been accepted by the entire world. Syria believed in the true wish of the co-sponsor of the peace process and in President Clinton's and Mrs. Albright's efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. Unfortunately, the signs we see before our very eyes, particularly what has taken place in the past few days, give us an idea of what could happen in the occupied Syrian Golan, particularly because Israeli policy since 1991 has been vague about the different tracks of the peace process. There has been a deliberate distortion of Syria's clear position concerning peace. In the light of those facts, we call on the Security Council to take the following steps.

First, the Council should put an immediate end to the Israeli aggression, ensure the withdrawal of the Israeli forces to their bases and put a stop to their aggression against the unarmed Palestinian people.

Secondly, the Council should assume its responsibilities for safeguarding international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter, and not apply different yardsticks or double standards. It should condemn aggression and the horrible crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying force in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Arab occupied territories. It should call for Israel to respect the Charter, all United Nations resolutions, international law and humanitarian international law. It should ask Israel to fully the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

Thirdly, the Council should once again reaffirm that Al-Quds is an integral part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. International law and humanitarian international law are applicable to Al-Quds, as well as to all the occupied Arab territories.

Fourthly, the international community should clearly recognize that the visit by Sharon to Al-Quds Al-Sharif was deliberate and was planned to provoke the national and religious feelings of Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims and Christians alike. The Security Council is called upon to clearly condemn Sharon's provocative visit and to condemn the Israeli Government for protecting it, which indicates an alliance between the Israeli Government and the Likud Party against the Palestinian cause, Al-Quds and Palestinian sovereignty over Al-Quds.

Fifthly, this horrible massacre, which has involved the killing of children, puts the credibility of the Security Council to the test. The Council cannot remain silent, unable to adopt a resolution necessary to put an end to Israeli aggression against the Arab inhabitants in the occupied Arab territories. The time has come to try the Israeli authorities responsible for such crimes. All rights of the Palestinian people have to be preserved and safeguarded, particularly their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State on their territory with Al-Quds as its capital and the full exercise of inalienable Palestinian sovereignty over Al-Quds.

Sixthly, the Council, and its permanent members in particular, should bring pressure to bear on Israel to pursue the peace process seriously, bearing in mind that no security can be achieved without a just and comprehensive peace ensuring respect for the dignity of all. Peace cannot be achieved through words; peace can be achieved only through sincere efforts aimed at implementing United Nations resolutions.

In conclusion, allow me to point out that danger and tension reside in Israel's continued defiance of the international community and international legitimacy and its rejection of the basis of a just and comprehensive peace. International legitimacy cannot continue to apply double standards, when it concerns Israel.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, thank you for convening this important meeting of the Security Council at this critical time for the Palestinian people. We have full confidence in your leadership and in your efforts to steer the deliberations of the Council in the month of October.

Since last Thursday, the Zionist forces in the occupied territories have reacted excessively and disproportionately to the justified protests that followed a flagrant act of provocation committed by the criminals of Sabra and Shatila and spread promptly across the whole occupied territory. In recent days, the whole area has been the scene of the killing of dozens and the injury of hundreds of defenceless Palestinian civilians.

The provocative act — committed last Thursday by one faction of the occupying regime, facilitated by the other and followed by the indiscriminate killing of Palestinians — negates the Israeli pretence of entertaining peaceful intentions or a desire for pacific coexistence with the Muslims and Christians of the region. This recent crime represents another attempt by the Zionists to desecrate the Islamic holy site and ultimately to destroy the Islamic nature of Beit al-Maqdis. It followed two previous attempts: one in 1969, to burn down the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and the other, in 1996, to dig tunnels underneath its blessed soil. In so doing, they insulted the religious feelings of more than 1 billion Muslims worldwide and initiated a new wave of crime in occupied Palestine.

The recent crime committed by the Israeli armed forces is consistent with the aggressive and

expansionist policies of Israel. It aims, in vain, at gaining international recognition of its claim to sovereignty over the holy Islamic sites. The Zionist regime' s repeated crimes and heavy-handed approach run counter to all its high-sounding and empty claims that it seeks peace. This regime is the main cause behind the tension and instability in the region. While deceitfully negotiating peace with the Palestinians, it violently assaults the oppressed and defenceless people of the occupied territories.

The events in the occupied territories are another illustration of the perennial unequal war of stone versus heavy weapons; Palestinian struggle versus Israeli aggression; and sacrifice for freedom and liberation versus arrogant oppression and occupation. This unequal war is unlikely to cease. If history is any lesson, oppression, aggression and heavy-handedness cannot last forever and the Palestinians will eventually gain control over their destiny.

The fundamental question for the international community, and particularly the Security Council and the Middle East peace brokers, is the amount of Palestinian blood, life, homelessness and agony we can justify before the occupiers and aggressors are tamed and the fundamental right of the Palestinians to self-determination in their own land is realized.

The international community in general and the Islamic world in particular are deeply concerned about the ongoing atrocities committed by Israeli troops. The incidents in recent days, partly captured on camera and viewed across the world, illustrate the contempt in which world public opinion is held by the Israeli regime. The disdain of the Israeli leaders for the principles of international law and the decisions of the United Nations is no secret to anyone in this Chamber. It is commonly acknowledged, deplored and condemned, but very little, if anything, is done about it.

Undoubtedly, this latest act by Israel is likely to further exacerbate the Middle East crisis unless the international community and the United Nations intervene immediately to stop the Israeli armed forces' brutal campaign against the civilians. In this respect, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Eighth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), called for an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers of the States members of the OIC to consider the issue.

There is no doubt that the Security Council in particular is expected to act resolutely with a view to putting an end to the violations by the occupying Power of the Fourth Geneva Convention and to paving the way for bringing those responsible to justice. The first step in this direction is explicit condemnation of the excessive use of force by the Israeli armed forces against defenceless civilians.

Several times in the past, the Security Council has been called upon to shoulder its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by putting an end to the inhuman and aggressive acts of the Israeli regime. Regrettably, however, the exercise or threat of exercise of the veto has so far prevented the Council from discharging its constitutional responsibility in such a crucial issue and has thus raised profound international disappointment. Undoubtedly, the inaction of the Security Council emboldens Israel to defy the wishes of the international community, reflected in, among other things, numerous General Assembly resolutions.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to join earlier speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am confident that, with your skills and sagacity, you will steer the deliberations of the Council to the desired results.

I should like to thank you and the members of the Council for your speedy response in convening this meeting to discuss the grave situation in occupied Palestine. It testifies to your determination to discharge your responsibilities seriously and firmly.

I also extend my thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Moctar Ouane of Mali, who guided the Security Council last month with his well-known wisdom, knowledge and expertise.

The international community has followed with great pain and anger the abhorrent massacre committed by the Israeli occupation forces in the forecourt of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and in other parts of occupied Palestine. In this massacre, dozens of

martyrs were killed and hundreds of defenceless, innocent Palestinian civilians — young people, the elderly, children, men and women — were wounded. Their feelings were provoked and their anger was fanned by the visit to the Al-Haram Al-Sharif forecourt by the extremist leader of the Likud Party, Ariel Sharon, whose bloody past is well known from the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

We were all moved watching the heartbreaking scene of an innocent Palestinian child being killed in the arms of his father, killed by the bullets of the occupation forces. His father was seriously injured while trying to protect his son. This scene is a most eloquent expression of the tragedy that the Palestinian people are living through in their occupied land. The scene stirs the hearts and awakens the consciences of those who have been ignoring the need for justice. May it also serve as a reminder to the international community, as represented by this Council, of the need to find a comprehensive and just solution to the ordeal of the Palestinian people, of the need to enable the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights and to choose their own destiny.

Instead of fulfilling its obligations and duties, instead of assuming its responsibility for the maintenance of security, and instead of preventing Ariel Sharon from violating the sanctity of the Islamic Holy sites and provoking the believers, the Israeli Government — while fully cognizant of the aims and goals of Sharon's visit and of the extent of his defiance of the feelings of Muslims, and while also cognizant of the ramifications of his visits for the situation in occupied Palestine and for the peace process — instead of responding appropriately took to killing defenceless civilians and bombarding Palestinians with rockets and laying siege to their towns with tanks, guns and helicopters. Perhaps — with a view to imposing a fait accompli and establishing Al-Quds Al-Sharif as Jewish — the Israeli Government's inhumane action was intended to continue the process that Sharon had started by desecrating the Islamic holy site and intimidating the Palestinians who defended their sacred sites and defended their dignity.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns Israel's brutal aggression against Palestinian citizens in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and in the occupied Palestinian territory. It believes that during the recent events, Israel, by persisting in its policy of using all kinds of weapons against unarmed citizens, has breached the most basic principles and international norms; it has defied the feelings of the Palestinians and of the Arab nation and the Islamic world; and it has breached the inviolability of the Islamic holy sites. The Israeli actions are a departure from the principles of peace and the agreements in international law that aim at restoring peace to the region. The barbaric Israeli practices witnessed by the world call attention to Israel's unwillingness to restore just peace and to Israel's persistence in the creation of obstacles and in resorting to violence against an unarmed people, defying all international instruments and conventions.

The Arabs have stressed on more than one occasion that peace is their strategic choice. The Arabs have demonstrated that they are willing to establish a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of international law, of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of the principle of land for peace. It is obvious that any desired just peace would require Israel to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories — including Palestine and, above all, Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as well as from the Syrian Golan and the remaining parts of southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa valley.

No proof or evidence is needed to establish the Arab character of Al-Quds. Al-Quds Al-Sharif is part and parcel of the occupied Palestinian territories covered under international law, as are all the occupied territories. Al-Quds is also covered by Security Council resolution 242 (1967), since it is a Palestinian area that was occupied in June 1967.

We call on the Security Council to fulfil its obligations and shoulder its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. We call on it to take all necessary measures to guarantee the protection of the Palestinian people against being killed or uprooted and the protection of the Islamic holy sites against further Israeli violations. We call on the Security Council to reiterate the importance of the implementation of its resolutions and of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the protection of civilians in occupied territories. In many of its relevant resolutions the Security Council has stressed that this Convention does indeed apply to all the Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds.

We welcome the Paris and Cairo meetings. We express the hope they will rectify the situation and put an end to the bloodshed and the acts of violence and

encourage the parties to return to the peace negotiations with a genuine desire and serious determination to achieve a comprehensive and just peace.

However, those responsible for the despicable events must be held accountable and investigated. The provocative visit by the Israeli opposition leader must be publicly condemned. We have to work seriously to avoid the recurrence of such an action. And we must also compensate both those Palestinians who have been harmed by the Israeli acts of suppression and terrorism and their families.

The President: I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to say that my delegation is glad to see you, Sir, presiding over the meetings of the Security Council for the month of October. We also congratulate Ambassador Ouane of Mali on the skill he displayed in conducting the Council's work in September.

Once again humankind is witnessing how the forces opposed to a peaceful, just and lasting solution in the Middle East try to replace peace and negotiation with violence and aggression.

Once again the world has been astounded to see how the actions of the Israeli forces have taken precious lives among the Palestinian civilian population. We watch with great frustration the cruel repression unleashed with the consent of the Government of Israel and the indiscriminate use of heavy weaponry and helicopter gunships against the defenceless civilian population and Palestinian facilities. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased.

This brutal provocation takes place at a time when negotiations between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority seemed to be resuming in pursuit of the longed for and necessary peace, and when through a number of peace initiatives the utmost was being done to get the negotiating process back on track.

Cuba vigorously condemns the provocations and barbaric acts committed against the Palestinian people. We demand an immediate end to the repression and acts of force, since their continuation would lead only to an extremely dangerous escalation of violence in the already very sensitive situation prevailing in Palestine, with unforeseeable regional and global repercussions.

The Security Council, through 25 different resolutions adopted over all these years, has confirmed its recognition of the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. The Israeli actions have once again breached those resolutions and many others adopted by the General Assembly and the Council itself. International law, the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law have been repeatedly trampled upon.

The international community would have expected more determined and effective action by the Security Council. When the long list of speakers is finished, this meeting will leave many of those present feeling unsatisfied.

Once again events have clearly proved that the Security Council fails to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security whenever there is interference from the hegemonic and domestic policy interests of one permanent member that arbitrarily and irresponsibly uses its powers and prerogatives.

Cuba reaffirms its full and unswerving solidarity with the Palestinian people in its just struggle to establish an independent and sovereign State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and to have all Arab occupied territories returned. We call upon the international community to strongly condemn the crimes and the delaying tactics used by Israel during all these years in order to impose its arrogant annexationist policy, which violates the most elementary norms of coexistence and international law.

My delegation welcomes with interest and hope the meetings in Paris and Cairo, but reiterates that a just and lasting solution will not be found for the Middle East conflict unless it is based on strict compliance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

If today we are unable to take effective actions that could reopen the path to peace and impede the return of provocation and violence of those sectors in Israel that are opposed to a peaceful solution to the conflict, we will only be paving the way for a new crisis.

The people of Palestine need, today more than ever, the support of the international community, and Cuba will not fail them.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Yemen. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also congratulate the Ambassador of Mali, your predecessor, on presiding over the Council last month. May I furthermore express our sincere thanks to you, Sir, for convening this meeting, which returns to the questions of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied Arab territories in the Security Council once again. Whatever efforts are made to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute outside the United Nations, the resolutions of the Security Council remain the only international legitimacy that must not be violated.

Israel's challenge to the Security Council, through a law annexing Jerusalem, Al-Quds, planted the seeds of the violence raging today. The provocative visit by Ariel Sharon to Al-Haram Al-Sharif was directly responsible for the eruption of violence. However, the acts of war waged by Israeli forces against defenceless Palestinians, including children, have gone beyond anything imaginable. More than 50 Palestinians have been slain through the use by the Israeli forces of live ammunition, heavy weaponry and helicopters. This is undoubtedly a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

In this regard, Mr. Abdul-Qader Ba-Jammal, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Yemen, has declared:

> "The Government of Yemen has followed with deep concern the bloody confrontations in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Al-Sharif following the provocative visit by Ariel Sharon to the site with the objective of exploding the situation in the occupied territories and preventing the continuation of the peace process as well as the implementation of all international resolutions obligating Israel to withdraw from all Arab occupied territories."

The Government of Yemen believes that the reluctance shown by the Barak Administration and its continuous reneging on its obligations was the reason for the aggressive behaviour by the Israeli extremist right and these acts of provocation and aggression vis-à-vis the Palestinian people and Islamic shrines. The Republic of Yemen, while roundly condemning the barbaric massacre by the Israeli armed forces, places squarely on the shoulders of Israel and the Barak Administration the responsibility for the deteriorating situation and the escalating feelings of frustration and despair among the Palestinian people. We call on the Security Council to put an end to the aggressive military acts by Israel. We call on the Security Council to reaffirm the need for a comprehensive solution, including a solution to the status of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

Finally, despite the seriousness of these most regrettable events, we must continue to make efforts for peace. We must strive towards a just, comprehensive and durable peace, a peace that takes into consideration the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and promotes peace and security, both regionally and internationally.

The President: I thank the representative of Yemen for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for October. We also extend our congratulations to the Permanent Representative of Mali, Ambassador Moctar Ouane, for his splendid stewardship of the Council in its eventful last month. Let me also thank you, Sir, for calling this meeting and giving us the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

The Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement made a statement yesterday on behalf of the Movement, with which we associate ourselves. As we are deeply concerned at the recent developments, we thought it

necessary also to share our sentiments with the Council. As many delegations have spoken yesterday and today, and as many more are to speak, I shall keep my statement short.

My Government is deeply concerned at the recent incidents of violence in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in other parts of the Palestinian National Authority areas and Israel. This has led to a most regrettable loss of life and property. It has also vitiated the atmosphere for the Middle East peace process. Issues involved in the Middle East peace process are of immense complexity. That is why the overriding need now is for restraint, avoidance of provocation and shunning all acts that could destabilize the process.

We have noted with increasing concern that the cessation of hostilities between the Palestinians and the Israelis was short-lived, and we hope that efforts to stop the violence will be redoubled, thus facilitating an early conclusion of the peace process. We remain convinced of the need for dialogue and peaceful negotiation to find a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of all issues. We support the endeavours of the international community towards that objective.

There had been considerable progress in the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Recent events should not be allowed to retard or delay the peace process, for which the leadership of Palestine and of Israel has striven so hard. We believe that, given the required will and determination, and given a commitment to settle disputes peacefully, no odds are insurmountable, no goal too far. Violence has to be abjured. Diplomacy and statesmanship have to triumph. There is no alternative and no other way towards lasting peace.

The President: I thank the representative of India for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We hail your wisdom and your determination, which have enabled States Members of the United Nations to state their views at this open meeting on a most important item that goes to the very core of the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council is meeting today to discuss the repression and aggression to which the Palestinian people are subjected not only in the territories occupied in 1967 but also in those occupied in 1948. That repression and aggression are blatant violations of international law, of international humanitarian law and of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The desecration by the perpetrator of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, the terrorist Ariel Sharon, of the holy Al-Haram Al-Sharif on 28 September 2000, and the subsequent use by the Zionist occupation forces of their military machine, including tanks, helicopters and missiles, against Palestinian civilians in order to suppress Palestinian anger, have thus far caused the death of more than 60 martyrs, among them the child Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra — whose name means "pearl", and who is indeed a pearl among martyrs — and they have caused the wounding of more than 2,000 others. This proves the aggressive nature of the Zionist entity and presents the international community and the United Nations with a genuine challenge. Can the international community, this time, defend what is right? Can it avenge those who have suffered and punish those who have wronged them?

Some previous speakers have expressed the hope that the Security Council would adopt the measures necessary to put an end to the injustice inflicted upon the Palestinians by the forces of occupation and that the Council would hold the criminals responsible. Unfortunately, the facts would suggest that those speakers will be disappointed; such action will be impossible because of the balance of power that has obtained in the Security Council ever since its establishment, and because the dominant Power in the Council — the United States of America — extends all possible support and protection to that iniquitous entity, Israel, and provides it with all means of destruction, including nuclear weapons. It also gives its blessing to that entity's aggression against Arab States. That unlimited support to Israel began with its establishment 52 years ago, and it will continue so long as the Security Council reflects the interests of the Power that dominates and controls it.

We say this not to discourage honourable members of the Council or to discourage other States Members of the United Nations which, in their statements yesterday and today, have expressed their very strong commitment to the principles of the Charter and their

genuine wish to put an end to the injustice inflicted upon the Palestinians and to the Arab nation. To the contrary, the present situation should provide an additional incentive to them all to study the core of the matter and seriously to seek radical solutions that would restore the rights of those who rightfully possess them.

The problem is not how we can push the Palestinians into unequal negotiations with the forces of occupation, forces which will certainly not restore their rights to them. What is needed is to study the core of the problem in order to find the appropriate solutions. The problem started in 1917, when a Briton named Balfour promised another Briton named Rothschild the establishment in Palestine of a national homeland for Rothschild and for other extremists like him. The problem is the military occupation of the Palestinian territory and the flow of adventurers into that land from Europe and the rest of the world under the pretext that it is a land without a people. The problem is the repeated acts of aggression perpetrated by that usurping entity against the Arab States and its occupation of the Arab territories, including the occupied Arab Golan. The problem resides in the tragedy of a people under occupation against whom all forms of repression are being practised. The problem is the suffering of more than 4 million Palestinian refugees who were pushed out of their land and who look back upon it as their homeland; they have the full right to return to it. The problem is in the Zionist creed — a racist, expansionist, arrogant and hateful creed. The problem resides in the threat to the sites held sacred by a billion Muslims and a billion Christians.

Palestine is part of the Arab nation, one of the oldest and noblest nations a nation on whose land religions and cultures have coexisted and which has given birth to one of the oldest and most noble civilizations in history. It is a nation that has a tremendous capacity to face challenges and greed, and to prevail over invaders, such as the Zionist entity, as it did once against the Moguls and the Crusaders. We expect the international community to stand by that nation in its just battle.

The President: I thank the representative of Iraq for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for your response to the call to convene this urgent important meeting following the grave events witnessed in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have led to the death of 60 Palestinians and more than 2,000 wounded. The Government and people of Mauritania wish to express their full solidarity with the Palestinian people. We bow before the martyrs who fell defending the legitimate rights of the Palestinian peoples, Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Islamic and Arab ummah.

We wish to express our thorough condemnation of the events we have witnessed — the premeditated firing upon defenceless civilians and the use of cannon, helicopter gunships, tanks, missiles, and live ammunition, a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We call on the United Nations to condemn these acts and to investigate in order to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators.

You are aware, undoubtedly, Mr. President, that these grave events are an obstacle to achieving peace in this region, a region in dire need of peace. On behalf of my delegation, I reaffirm our support for the peace process. We believe that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region can be achieved only through the Madrid terms of reference, the principle of land for peace and the full implementation of Security Council resolutions, thus ensuring full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories and reclaiming the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

These grave events may well finally drive the last nail into the coffin of peace in the Middle East. Today, more than ever, the international community must intensify its efforts to overcome obstacles to just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritania for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Hussein Hassouna, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the

Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hassouna (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to extend to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Allow me also to express my sincere appreciation for your speedy response to the request to convene this open Security Council meeting on a matter of great importance, not only to the Arab, Islamic and Christian world, but to all members of the international community at large.

The Security Council is meeting today at the request of the Arab Group at the United Nations, with a view to considering the Israeli assault on Al-Haram Al-Sharif in occupied East Jerusalem and the Israeli campaign of repression against Palestinian civilians in all the occupied Palestinian territories.

Security Council members and others who have spoken here during the past two days unanimously believe that the bloody events in occupied East Jerusalem and the other occupied Palestinian territories, even within Israel itself, were ignited because the extremist leader of the Likud Party, Ariel Sharon, supported, regrettably, by the Israeli Government, violated the sacred character of the Al-Haram Al-Sharif plaza. This violation has clearly roused Palestinian feelings and the feelings of all parties in the Islamic and Christian worlds, because the circumstances have affirmed Israel's arrogant disregard for the sanctity and dignity of those sites for the sake of achieving vested political interests and goals.

Moreover, there is an international consensus that the large and growing number of Palestinian victims — be they men, women or children — is due to the excessive use of force by the Israeli forces and their aiming of their most sophisticated and lethal firepower at the torsos of those civilian martyrs. This information comes from the testimonies of human rights organizations and other impartial groups, such as Amnesty International and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Allow me to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the innocent victims.

The League of Arab States was the first international organization to view these grave events with concern and seriousness. The Council of the League of Arab States has been discussing these painful developments since they began. It took up the matter at an emergency session on 1 October 2000. It has laid full responsibility at Israel's door for the eruption of recent events, and has called upon the international community to pressure Israel to withdraw its forces from around Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the flashpoints around Palestinian towns. It has also called for an international investigation into Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people and for the prosecution before an international criminal court of Israelis responsible for those crimes. Furthermore, the Council of the League of Arab States has called upon the Security Council, and on its permanent members in particular, to fully assume their responsibility for the maintenance of peace and for the protection of the Palestinian people by implementing internationally and legally binding resolutions and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

At a time when humanity has just taken its first steps into the new century that ushers in the third millennium; at a time when humanity aspires to wipe from the world's face the tears shed during the last century; and at a time when humanity is trying to inspire itself with wishes and desires to make serious attempts to ensure peace for all, we find that Israel's aggressive forces — which hate peace — are determined to follow a path that goes against the path of peace that the countries of the world aspire to follow. Our Arab States have indeed chosen peace as a strategic choice. The massacre at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in which the blood of unarmed civilians was shed and the wishes of humanity at large for peace were scuttled, is an eloquent testimony to Israel's violation of all international instruments on human rights and the protection of civilians and children, in whose drafting and ratification we all participated and that we committed ourselves to respect. It is altogether unacceptable to allow Israeli violations to pass without measures of deterrence and punishment.

We are fully aware of the gravity of the situation. The League of Arab States therefore calls upon the Security Council immediately to intervene in fulfilment of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We call upon it to intensify its efforts to put an end to Israeli aggression, to provide protection for the Palestinian people, to take every necessary measure to force Israel to end its

unfounded, unjustified and provocative violations and to have that country fully withdraw its forces from the area around Al-Haram Al-Sharif and all occupied Palestinian towns, in implementation of internationally binding resolutions.

Those resolutions all affirm that East Jerusalem is an integral part of occupied Palestinian territories, to which Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and all provisions of international law on occupied territories apply. If the United Nations is truly interested in promoting respect for the rules of international justice, if it cares about the rule of law, and if it wishes to implement the principle that places all States on an equal footing and calls on them all without exception to implement fully the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and other provisions of this Organization, then the League of Arab States maintains that it is high time to force Israel to implement United Nations resolutions, which are legally binding on all States.

I refer in particular to the resolutions of the Security Council dealing with Al-Quds, Israeli settlements, the withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, and respect for the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. In our view, if these international resolutions had been implemented by Israel in the first place, the United Nations would not be facing this explosive situation in the Middle East and we would not be witnessing today the collapse of all efforts made to establish a lasting peace in the region.

In conclusion, the League of Arab States expresses the hope that the ongoing worthy efforts aimed at salvaging the peace process will succeed. We would stress, however, that when the Arab nation opted for comprehensive and just peace in accordance with the internationally binding resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, it did so because we believed that Israel would in turn commit itself to withdrawing its forces from all occupied Arab territories and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President: I thank Ambassador Hassouna, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): I would like to join my colleagues in extending to you, Mr. President, our warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October.

Turkey deplores the recent acts of violence at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, as well as in other Palestinian areas, which, as a result of the use of excessive force, have led to the killing of more than 50 innocent civilians and the injuring of over 1,500. We would like to extend to the bereaved families of the victims our heartfelt condolences and profound sympathy.

During the period preceding the regrettable developments, tension in the region had mounted as a consequence of the difficult phase in which the peace process found itself. That tension should not have been exacerbated by blatant provocative actions. Unfortunately, the events we have seen did precisely that, fanning the die-hard dynamics of confrontation. Nothing can justify the loss of innocent lives, no matter how charged the atmosphere.

We think that it is time now for de-escalation. We call on both parties to restore calm through the exercise of utmost restraint.

We believe that the withdrawal of Israeli security forces would constitute a first step towards normalizing the situation on the ground.

A transparent and impartial investigation, with the involvement of both Israel and Palestine, into the causes of the recent upheaval should be undertaken as soon as possible. It is of the utmost importance that due procedures should be initiated against the perpetrators of these criminal acts, so that the bereaved families can find solace.

Turkey continues to follow the developments in the region, in close contact with the parties. The Turkish Government has also expressed its outrage and concern in the face of the escalating violence through its direct contacts with President Arafat and Israeli Acting Foreign Minister Ben-Ami. Furthermore, in response to the request for emergency humanitarian assistance made by the Palestinian side, my

Government has decided to contribute $500,000 as well as medical supplies and medicine. It is incumbent upon all of us to alleviate the plight of those who have fallen victim to this senseless violence.

Turkey maintains its hope that these events, however excruciating, will not deflect the parties from their principal course, the Middle East peace process. We, as members of the international community, should assume our responsibility to help revive this process. We continue to believe that a lasting settlement will be the best answer to provocateurs of all sorts.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 6.05 p.m.